REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the detailed Office Action. The objections and submissions made by the Examiner in the Office Action have been carefully considered. In response, the claims have been amended to emphasize the distinguishing features of the invention.

Claim Rejections

The Examiner has rejected to claims 1 to 6 and claim 8 as obvious in light of the disclosure in Bobry (US 6,229,565) in view of Akhavian (6,543,880).

In response, the Applicant has amended claim 1 to highlight the fact that the storage and feed channels of the printhead are progressively narrower towards the printhead chip, as illustrated in Figure 4 of the application. This channel tapering is especially important for an efficient ink delivery within the compact system of the present invention (see page1, lines 26-32) since it enables the transfer from the macro scale of the storage reservoirs to the micro scale of the micron-sized nozzles of the MEMS printhead chip, which is the underlying technology of the present invention (see US Patent Application No. 09/425,419 cited on page 1 line 28, now US Patent 6,273,544).

Bobry fails to discuss any details of the ink feeding arrangement employed in his system. However, in the description of the printheads used with the system and described in US Patent 5,781,211 (referenced on line 40 of col. 5 in Bobry) there is no mentioning of either printhead chips or MEMS technology. Thus, it would appear that Bobry does not have the problem of supplying ink to micron-scale nozzles, which is a problem targeted by the present invention. The printheads in Akhavian are actually called printhead dies and also appear to relate to technology on a much larger scale than that targeted by the present invention. Furthermore, Akhavian actually discloses a system where the ink feeding passages 323 (Figure 7) have constant cross-section. Thus, neither of the cited prior art documents faces a similar problem or offers a similar solution to these of the present invention. Therefore, an ordinary worker in this field, apprised of these prior art documents, would not derive the specific combination of features defined by claim 1 as a matter of straightforward routine. Accordingly, claim 1 clearly possesses the requisite inventive step

to qualify for patentability. Consequently, claims 2 to 6 and 8 are also non-obvious, by virtue of their dependence on claim 1.

Examiner has also objected to claim 7, as being unpatentable over Bobry in view of Akhavian and Hawkins (6,154,254), and claim 9, as being unpatentable over Bobry in view of Akhavian and Kokubo (6,007,195). Kokubo does not provide any teaching or suggestion of the ink feeding arrangements of the present invention either. Therefore, the combination of Bobry, Akhavian and Kokubo also fails to describe all the features of the amended claim 1. Accordingly, claims 7 and 9 are now also novel and inventive when compared to the cited prior art documents, whether considered separately or in combination.

In light of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's objections have been successfully traversed and that the application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of the application is courteously solicited.

It is respectfully submitted that all of the Examiner's objections have been successfully traversed. Accordingly, it is submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of the application are courteously solicited.

Very respectfully,

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